

Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments
Appropriations Hearing
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Thursday, February 24th, 2022

Juan Rios

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Juan Rios, and I am a registered voter in East Hartford, CT.

I am here to testify in regard to sharing my grave concerns about the proposed budget for DMHAS.

The supportive services I receive help me live a more sustained and quality lifestyle of my liking. These services include supportive housing, and affordable health insurance. I do not have a current case manager assigned to me, however in the past I did. Once my case manager left, I was left with finding support services on my own.

In that light I would like to commend Governor Lamont for preserving the allocation for Supportive Housing Services- along with investment in the Department of Housing budget for 350 units of additional affordable housing and \$2.8 million to fund supportive housing services. I feel it's important to provide the \$2.5 million in additional resources for Diversion and Discharge Services. Another commend is preserving the allocation for young adult services. I personally feel the young adult population shouldn't get looked over because mental health can affect anyone at any age and providing young adult support services is a great foundation for a better lifestyle. Providing \$11.7 million in additional resources for Substance Abuse Services is important because the support needed in those dark times is what has helped some of my peers overcome their addictions. I feel many mental health clients would benefit from providing \$1.2 million in new resources to provide mental health peer supports in hospital emergency departments. When I was hospitalized for a GI complication I was treated fairly, and my voice was heard by the nurses who provided me with my care. If providing additional funding for mental health emergency departments, the peer support staff would be able to provide more caring compassion. Preserving funding for DMHAS Legal Services, I feel I would be provided with a Case Manager, to help with any future support services I may need.

However, there are things that Governor Lamont's proposed budget does not address that are of concern to me providing additional funds to the budget would allow for case managers, and social workers, to be hired and help the mental health community build a better future for the mental health clientele. The funding would provide safer transit to and from mental health services, doctor appointments etc. The underfunding of community non-profits

would affect me by not providing me with employment services. The groups I attend at Common Ground can help me find proper employment and interviewing skills to support the line of employment I'm looking to get into. I would like to see funding in place for a long-term plan to prevent loss of supportive services that either myself or my peers receive.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and share my experience with you about what this would mean to me, and those I care most about.